

**Carlton County
Coordinator/HR Office**

1307 Cloquet Avenue
Suite #1
Cloquet, MN 55720
Phone: (218) 384-9141
www.co.carlton.mn.us

Carlton County

County-wide newsletter brought to you by the County Coordinator's Office

Issue 03 October / November / December 2023

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Pg. 2 . . . New Jail Projects Create More Humane Spaces
- Pg. 3 . . . AMC County Achievement Award
- Pg. 3 . . . Carlton County Justice Center Delivers Holiday Cheer
- Pg. 4 . . . Don't Feed the Sharks
- Pg. 4 . . . Employee Assistance Program
- Pg. 5 . . . Let's Get Acquainted
- Pg. 5 . . . Veteran's Corner

New Jail Projects Create More Humane Spaces

By Frank Jossi

Light-filled common areas. Calming colors on walls and ceilings. Waiting areas with comfortable chairs, pleasantly patterned tiles and natural wood accents. Building designs that do not readily disclose interior activities.

The modern jail or detention center in Minnesota no longer tries to look like a gulag or a place devoted to punishment and not restoration. As detention facilities have begun to house more inmates charged with crimes related to their mental illnesses, correctional officials and counties have sought detention centers that, in their design, seek to treat them with dignity.

Scott W. Fettig, president of Klein McCarthy Architects, said that younger correction officials and county commissioners desired more humane jail designs as they housed more female, elderly and mentally challenged populations.

Mental illness "has been a huge deal and I think as people get more educated in the corrections field, they're talking about it more," he said. "As the jail administrators have gotten younger, they're definitely open to trying something different versus warehousing."

Tim Clark, vice president and director of operations for Adolfson & Peterson Construction, said newer jails have become more akin to secure hospitals rather than detention facilities. Many inmates may receive medical care during their stays. "It's not always about locking them up; it's about recovery," he said. "There's a big focus on recovery versus incarceration."

Newer jails have softer designs with controlled lighting that matches the day's progression, colors that provide warmth, materials that dampen sound and daylighting that appeal to prisoners and corrections staff that must monitor them. Clark said that the facilities do not have sharp edges and employ anti-ligature systems that do not allow inmates to harm themselves.

One of Adolfson & Peterson's more significant projects involved the \$126 million renovation of a 40-year-old building at the Minnesota Security Hospital in St. Peter. The psychiatric rehabilitation facility treats mentally ill patients assigned to it by the courts because they pose a danger to themselves and others.

Interior of the Minnesota Security Hospital in St. Peter that features wider hallways, clear glass, tiles and more comfortable furniture

Designed by BWBR, the seven-year project created more than 40 patient transitional rooms and replaced an 80-bed, multi-floor area with a single-floor wing. The design added wider hallways, replaced cinderblock with clear glass, removed the carpet in favor of tiles, and placed more comfortable furniture in common areas, including kitchens and lounges.

Continued on page 2



Carlton County is in the process of building a 117,000 square-foot justice center that will include courts, the sheriff's department and the offices of the Guardian Ad Litim, attorney, public defender and the "Justice-Involved Females Unit." (Submitted rendering: Klein McCarthy Architects)

2023 Carlton County Board of Commissioners



Dick Brenner
Member
218.879.5572

District 1
Dick.Brenner@co.carlton.mn.us



Marv Bodie
Vice-Chairperson
218.879.2085

District 2
Marv.Bodie@co.carlton.mn.us



Thomas Proulx
Member
218.348.4288

District 3
Thomas.Proulx@co.carlton.mn.us



Susan Zmyslony
Chairperson
218.380.2170

District 4
Susan.Zmyslony@co.carlton.mn.us



Gary Peterson
Member
218.380.4949

District 5
Gary.Peterson@co.carlton.mn.us

*Board meetings are held at the Transportation Building on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 8:30 a.m. and the 4th Monday of every month at 4:00 p.m.

Continued: New Jail Projects Create More Humane Spaces

Clark said the design breaks housing areas into the severity of a patient's illness. Before their release, they stay in a dorm-style situation. The goal of architecture and choice of materials came down to making patients more comfortable, and it worked, he said. Aggressive behavior among patients declined 46% and staff saw a 34% decline in injuries.

Clark and Fettig, whose firm concentrates on civic building and detection projects, often work together. A project now under construction for Carlton County involving both is a 117,000 square-foot "justice center" that will include courts, the sheriff's department and the offices of the Guardian Ad Litim, attorney, public defender and the "Justice-Involved Females (JIF) Unit." The JIF unit focuses programming on reintegration and rehabilitation.

Little details can make a difference. Fettig said jail officials working in Carlton and Itasca counties told him to use blue on walls and ceilings in their new facilities because they found the color "did make a difference" in relaxing patients. Pastel greens and blues, for example, work better than primary colors, he said, and red and orange are generally not considered candidates for walls.

Paul Coughlin, the jail administrator in the Carlton County Sheriff's Office, said the new \$75 million justice center replaces a 1970s-era jail and 1922 courthouse while bringing together all departments in one place who can work together to give people charged with crimes the needed services.

The new justice center, half completed, abides by the state's prison construction codes. Inmates have larger spaces instead of one long room of detention cells. Those jailed are split into various cell areas depending on the charges they face and whether mental illness may play a role in their incarceration, Coughlin said.

The facility has 80 units for inmates and a 16-bed area for women who often are the primary caregivers in their families and suffer co-dependency issues, he said.

Minnesota has few options for people charged with crimes and suffering mental health issues outside of having them stay in jails, he said. Often, they may have extended stays in detention centers even after the courts find they need mental health services.

Natural light, quieting colors and sound reduction all play a role in making the jail not only more pleasant for the incarcerated but for those who have to work in the facility. "For some folks, it's a lifetime of work and trying to improve the process and systems," he said.

Coughlin said the justice system will be the most expensive public investment ever made in Carlton County. "We're just trying to make it as efficient and effective as possible for all involved, including the taxpayers, who ultimately pay for these projects," he said.

Fettig said Carlton and other projects incorporate the best practices in the industry. Rather than having many cells in one place, jails now break them into pods where inmates stay alone in single rooms to avoid potential conflicts with roommates. Fettig said that two-level detention areas raise desks so guards are at eye level with inmates on the first floor and can monitor the second level with the help of video cameras displaying activities on computer monitors.

State prison construction regulations call for more natural light, which also helps reduce inmate stress, a positive consequence for staff. It also helps assist with employee retention, he said.

Jails with better materials, lighting and design might cost slightly more, but total budgets in the millions of dollars mute the impact. County commissioners and jail officials have a growing amount of data showing that civilized facilities positively influence those incarcerated and the staff that must monitor them.

Still, it requires educating elected officials that "we're not busting the bank" to construct a better jail," he said. "We're talking pennies on the dollar to get this stuff done."

(Reprinted with permission from EnVeritas Group)



The renovated Minnesota Security Hospital in St. Peter created more than 40 patient transitional rooms and replaced an 80-bed, multi-floor area with a single-floor wing. The design added wider hallways, replaced cinderblock with clear glass, removed the carpet in favor of tiles, and placed more comfortable furniture in common areas. (Submitted Photo: Adolfson & Peterson)

Association of Minnesota Counties Announces 2023 County Achievement Awards

Fond du Lac Band Human Services, Carlton County Public Health & Human Services, and Arrowhead Regional Corrections received a County Achievement Award for a Tribal / County Agreement. In 2023, Carlton County, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Arrowhead Regional Corrections completed a current 12 page Tribal / County Agreement that guides agreed upon best practices, protocols and processes when working collaboratively with children and families. The agreement covers child welfare/child protection, child & adult mental health, adult protection, public health, and emergency preparedness.



Back row L to R: AMC President Mary Jo McGuire, County Commissioner Gary Peterson, County Commissioner Marv Bodie, County Commissioner Sue Zmyslony, County Commissioner Dick Brenner, County Commissioner Tom Proulx, Janell Barney (FDL). Front row L to R: County Coordinator Dennis Genereau, Jr., Public Health and Human Services Director Dave Lee.

Carlton County Justice Center Delivers Holiday Cheer

Special thanks to the amazing team working on the new Carlton County Justice Center. A collaboration between Jail staff, A&P Construction and many subcontractors raised over \$1,700 in donations. They paired with Carlton County's Restorative Justice team who worked with local schools and identified 15 plus families and 35 plus children who needed some support this Christmas. All gifts were delivered on December 20th. Thank you to the volunteers who helped make this year special. Donations from CC Jail staff, Custom Drywall, Thelen Mechanical, Summit Fire, Fransen Decorating, Adolfson & Peterson Construction, Hunt Electrical, Thelen Heating and Roofing, Northern Insulation, KMH steel as well as other county staff helped make this a successful event.



Employee Service Awards

Rhiannon Carey - PHHS
10 Years

Jesica Burdick - PHHS
10 Years

Susan Dedina - PHHS
10 Years

David Radzak - Sheriff's Office
10 Years

Melissa DeRosier-Holshouser - Sheriff's Office
10 Years

Lynn Gibson - Attorney's Office
10 Years

Tricia Hackensmith - PHHS
20 Years

Gregory Thompson - Transportation
30 Years



DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



DontFeedTheSharks.org

What is a "Claim Shark"?

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

Who are the Claim Sharks?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Trajector Medical | • Patriot Angels |
| • Vet Benefits Guide | • Veteran Care Services |
| • Veterans Guardian | • VetComm |
| • VA Claims Insider | • VA Claims Academy |
| • Telemedica | • Vet Assist |

Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp LeJeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees



Employee Assistance Program

The MCIT Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a risk management tool designed to help employees and officials of MCIT members identify and resolve challenges that may affect their personal life or performance at work. It is a voluntary program that can assist employees, their spouse and dependents with difficult personal concerns through no-cost access to qualified counselors. Call 1.800.550.6248 to connect with an Employee Assistance Program counselor.

**Carlton County
Committee's**

Building Committee -
2nd Wednesday of the month at 1:00 p.m.
(Government Services Building -GSB)

Committee of the Whole -
1st Tuesday of the month at 4:00 p.m. (TB)

Diversity Committee -
4th Tuesday of the month at 9:00 a.m.
(PH&HS)

Finance Committee -
1st Tuesday of the month at 2:30 p.m. (TB)

Policy Committee -
3rd Monday of the month at 2:00 p.m.
(Law Enforcement Center - LEC)

Management Team -
1st Tuesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. (GSB)

Supervisors Committee -
3rd Thursday quarterly at 2:00 p.m.
(Varies)

Wellness Committee -
2nd Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m.
(Varies)

**For a more detailed Carlton County
Committee list [click here.](#)**



Are you interested in submitting an article in the next Carlton County Newsletter? Email or mail your articles and pictures by the March 15, 2024 deadline to:

Shanny Hurst
Carlton County Coordinator's Office
1307 Cloquet Avenue, Suite #1
Cloquet, MN 55720
shanny.hurst@co.carlton.mn.us

*Please note that all submissions are subject to editing, as needed.

Let's Get Acquainted With the Carlton County Truancy Officer

Hello! My name is Kenzie Friedman. This is my first full school year as the Carlton County Truancy Officer. I have lived in Cloquet for the past 8 years, but I grew up in Sauk Rapids, MN. I received my BSW from UWS in 2016.

As the truancy officer, I collaborate with the 7 school districts by addressing attendance concerns of students who have missed 10 percent or more school days. My goal is to work with the students to overcome barriers and challenges of attending school, as well as to find what motivates the students in school before the absences escalate to truancy court. When kids miss school, it presents academic challenges and I work to support these children to succeed during their school career.

Outside of work I spend a lot of time with family and friends. As a family we enjoy being outside, no matter what the season is. My two kids, Deacon and Presley, keep me busy with all of their activities and sports. Other things I enjoy are camping, fishing, snowshoeing, rollerblading, and bike rides/walks with the kids and our dog, Surly.



Veteran's Corner - Did You Know

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all World War II Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA inpatient and outpatient health care.

Under this expansion, all WWII Veterans who served between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, are now eligible for VA health care, regardless of their length of service or financial status. These Veterans will not have to pay inpatient or outpatient copays, enrollment fees, or monthly premiums.

VA is reaching out by phone and mail to encourage WWII Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA care to apply today. Veterans who enroll may also keep their private providers, Medicare, and most other insurance to meet their health care needs.

All WWII Veterans are encouraged to enroll in VA health care – the best, most-affordable health care in America for Veterans. Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in [overall quality ratings](#) and [patient satisfaction ratings](#).

Veterans who were not approved for VA health care in the past due to income limits should apply again; income levels no longer apply due to this expansion. VA cannot automatically enroll these Veterans in health care; WWII Veterans must [apply for VA health care](#) if they are not currently enrolled.

While World War II Veterans will no longer have to pay inpatient or outpatient copays, they may still have to pay modest medication or urgent care or long-term care copayments in some cases, depending on their [eligibility and service connection](#).

To apply for VA health care, visit [VA's health care enrollment website](#), call 1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411), or [visit your nearest VA medical center or clinic](#).

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer."